

P 281303Z NOV 95  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6355  
INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
AMEMBASSY RABAT  
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
AMEMBASSY MADRID  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
GCC COLLECTIVE  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 015945

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ENA AND S/CT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/28/05

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KISL](#) [LY](#) [UK](#)

SUBJECT: MURDER OF QADHAFI OPPONENT IN LONDON

¶1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY: MICHAEL J. HABIB,  
MINISTER-COUNSELOR FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS. REASON: 1.5(D).

¶2. (U) ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, AN EXILED OPPONENT  
OF QADHAFI'S REGIME WAS FOUND STABBED TO DEATH IN HIS  
WEST LONDON GROCER'S SHOP ON SUNDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER

¶26. FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS OF ALI MEHMED ABU ZEID HAVE  
BEEN QUICK TO SUGGEST THAT HE MAY HAVE BEEN ASSASSINATED  
BY LIBYAN SECURITY AGENTS.

¶3. (U) ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, ABU ZEID WAS FORCED  
TO LEAVE LIBYA ABOUT TWENTY YEARS AGO AFTER SERVING  
EIGHT MONTHS IN PRISON FOR ACTIVITIES HOSTILE TO THE  
LIBYAN GOVERNMENT. A SPOKESMAN FOR SCOTLAND YARD SAID  
INVESTIGATORS WERE "KEEPING AN OPEN MIND" ABOUT THE  
CRIME WHILE NOTING THAT THE CRIME DID NOT APPEAR TO  
INVOLVE BURGLARY. HOWEVER, A POLICE SOURCE TOLD THE  
PRESS THAT A POLITICALLY MOTIVATED KILLING WOULD MORE  
LIKELY HAVE INVOLVED A SHOOTING OR BOMBING, AND NOT, AS  
IN THIS CASE, A GRUESOME MULTIPLE STABBING. (ACCORDING  
TO TABLOID ACCOUNTS, ABU ZEID WAS STABBED IN THE BACK AT  
HIS STORE'S ENTRANCE AND THEN DISEMBOWELED OVER THE  
HALAL MEAT COUNTER AT THE REAR OF THE SHOP.)

¶4. (C) A CONTACT ASSOCIATED WITH THE LIBYAN OPPOSITION  
TOLD POLOFF ON NOVEMBER 28 THAT ABU ZEID WAS AN  
EXTREMELY WELL-LIKED FIGURE IN THE LOCAL LIBYAN  
COMMUNITY. HE CLAIMED THAT ABU ZEID WAS NOT INVOLVED IN  
THE EMOTIONAL INTERNECINE DISPUTES THAT CHARACTERIZE THE  
LIBYAN OPPOSITION MOVEMENT AND THAT HE MAINTAINED GOOD  
RELATIONS WITH EVERYONE. ABU ZEID HAD NOT BEEN  
POLITICALLY ACTIVE SINCE THE LATE EIGHTIES AND HE HAD  
"NO ENEMIES EXCEPT THE QADHAFI REGIME".

¶5. (C) OUR SOURCE CLAIMED THAT ABU ZEID HAD RECENTLY  
RECEIVED THREATENING PHONE CALLS AND HAD MOVED HIS  
FAMILY WITHIN THE LAST TEN DAYS. HE HAD TOLD FRIENDS  
THAT IF ANYTHING HAPPENED TO HIM, LIBYAN SECURITY  
OFFICIALS WERE TO BE HELD RESPONSIBLE. LIBYAN  
OPPOSITIONISTS WERE CONVINCED ABU ZEID HAD BEEN TARGETED  
PRECISELY BECAUSE HE WAS WELL-KNOWN AND WIDELY LIKED AND  
THUS HIS MURDER, PARTICULARLY WHEN CARRIED OUT IN SUCH A  
BRUTAL FASHION, WOULD HAVE A DEEPLY CHILLING EFFECT ON  
LIBYAN EXPATRIATES EVERYWHERE.

¶6. (C) SCOTLAND YARD WILL UNDOUBTEDLY FOLLOW ANY LEAD  
SUGGESTING A POLITICALLY MOTIVATED CRIME. POST WILL  
REPORT ANY INDICATION OF OFFICIAL LIBYAN INVOLVEMENT IN  
THE MURDER OF ABU ZEID.

CROWE